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Winthrop Projects 3.9 Percent Tuition Increase

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Winthrop Projects 3.9 Percent Tuition Increase

Quick Facts

- President DiGiorgio Friday outlined to trustees his plan for Winthrop's smallest tuition increase in a decade. Trustees approved the plan, while reserving the right to amend related fees if the S.C. General Assembly makes substantive changes to pending allocations when legislators meet to complete work on the state budget.
- Operating cost reductions from previous years will continue into the new fiscal year, while increases in the employer share of health insurance premium costs will be absorbed by Winthrop for all employees. Likewise, costs of operating the Winthrop Academic Success Center, which had been supported by a federal grant until this year, also will be absorbed by Winthrop.



Anthony DiGiorgio

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop University officials on Friday all but finalized their **tuition increase** for 2011-2012 at **3.9 percent** – the lowest such increase in a decade. Trustees could re-visit the issue later this month, but only if the **S.C. General Assembly** makes substantive changes to the higher education portion of the statewide budget plan when they return to session next week. Legislators' top priority will be to complete action on the **state's spending plan** for the new fiscal year that begins July 1.

"Decisions made in Columbia remain the biggest factor in what tuition turns out to be for our students each year," **Winthrop President Anthony DiGiorgio** told trustees during their annual June meeting on campus. "The House and Senate are in agreement on an additional cut to higher education of about 6 percent in annual operating funds, and that will cost Winthrop almost \$800,000 more in the new fiscal year, on top of the \$12 million in state support that has disappeared in recent years due to the Great Recession."

But "there are some other state funding questions still very much in flux in Columbia," the president said, which is why he recommended that the **full board reserve the right** for the executive committee to amend fees if needed once all the variables have been decided.

"We would prefer not to have to go back to the drawing board," he added.

Under the approved plan, in-state undergraduate students would pay **\$6,328 in fall semester**, \$240 more than in fall 2010. Out-of-state students would pay **\$11,898** -- \$452 more than a year ago. [See here for projected student fees.](#)

When **DiGiorgio** met with the executive officers of the board last month, he had indicated university officials intended to recommend a tuition increase no higher than last year's, and were continuing "to economize everywhere we can," in consideration of families who are still impacted by the **Great Recession**.

"We have been successful in pegging this recommendation at a full percentage point below last year's increase," he said Friday, adding that "at the same time, families come to Winthrop expecting a certain quality, and Winthrop will continue to deliver that, even when it requires us to take on new initiatives to meet that quality expectation."

One example he cited: “Today’s students have to be prepared to work in a **global economy**, and Winthrop will be infusing **more global learning opportunities** into its programs in the year ahead as part of that commitment to quality.

“That’s what we mean when we say higher education is having to do more to prepare students nowadays, even though public investment in colleges and universities is shrinking,” he said.

Since the recession began, state legislators have **reduced state general appropriations** to colleges and universities by half of previous levels, so that the state now provides less than 10 percent of Winthrop’s overall budget. On June 30, two years of federal stimulus funding will have expired as well, so officials have had to use a mix of internal spending reductions and vacancy management to prepare for the loss of that \$3.4 million in federal support.

As a result, **university publications** will continue be provided mostly on-line, rather than distributed in printed form, and more **business processes** also are moving on-line as the university undergoes a mandatory multi-year conversion to a **new administrative computing system**.

Winthrop is continuing to manage **routine personnel vacancies**, filling some deemed essential, but redistributing work for others. **Travel** will continue to be prioritized to that involving students in academic presentations or otherwise essential to faculty’s professional development and advancement.

While **furlough days for employees** have not been included in the plan for the coming year, they cannot be ruled out until final enrollment numbers are available in early fall. Winthrop’s 126th academic year will open Aug. 23 with **Convocation ceremonies** in **Byrnes Auditorium**.

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